



KELLEY COLE OWNER, GIA'S ITALIAN KITCHEN

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You know how families don't eat together like they used to? In decades past, families and friends lived in the same communities and same cities. Families had dinner together on Sundays and maintained relationships & communities to support each other. Today, we are all over the country, and have lost touch with our loved ones, and those who support us.

As owner and founder of Gia's Italian Kitchen, **I bring your friends and family together through Italian cooking**, where I come to you for a private cooking experience (in-person or virtually). **You select a custom menu**, many of which are from my family in Tuscany, and we cook together. Picture a zoom cooking experience with your family and friends across the country. Engage your parents, siblings, children and grandchildren. Reunite with high school or college friends or even your neighbors in a fun, learning environment!

The Brick Kitchen

Independence, Iowa (December 2022 – present)



I teach advanced cooking classes with hands on experience and dinner served at the end. Every month, we select a unique and authentic menu to excite and challenge our participants, such as homemade fettuccini with a light herb and pecorino sauce, or an Italian cream puff with homemade limoncello custard. This privately-owned small business is a gem in Iowa that provides high-end cookware, bakeware, creative gadgets, and Extra-Virgin Olive Oil. They have become a destination for both in-state and out-of-state guests.

- Classes have 16 participants and last about 2 1/2 hours

The Hope Lodge

Iowa City, Iowa (February 2025 – present)



I am so honored and blessed to collaborate with the American Cancer Society in Iowa City, IA. The Hope Lodge invited me to provide cooking classes and nutritional information to the patients and their families, in their beautiful dining and kitchen space.

The American Cancer Society Hope Lodge program provides a free home away from home for cancer patients and their caregivers. More than just a roof over their heads, it's a nurturing community that helps patients access the care they need. Each Hope Lodge community offers a supportive, homelike environment where guests can share a meal, join in the evening's activities, or unwind in their own private room. Patients staying at a Hope Lodge must be in active cancer treatment.

The Marion Library

Marion, Iowa (February 2023 – present)



I teach introductory cooking classes with hands on experience and samples served at each session. As part of the city monthly events program, I show participants how cooking Italian is easier than they think. The newly constructed library has a full kitchen and event space, perfect for cooking classes. We select one or two dishes, such as a fall maple pesto or baked caprese pasta, that they can recreate at home.

- Classes have up to 40 participants and last about 1 hour

Gia's Italian Kitchen, Owner & Founder Cedar Rapids, Iowa (2019 – present)



Having grown up in the kitchen with a large Italian family, I bring expertise, authentic recipes, and the love of connecting friends & family together through food. **I offer interactive cooking instruction, in-person and virtually, for private group dinners, as well as personalized coaching in the kitchen and employer teambuilding events.** This is all served with a generous helping of *amore*...and 10% of our profits are donated to Feed Iowa First and Feeding America!

My grandmother, Nonoini, taught me how to cook at a young age, and I cook today with my mom every chance I get. It is a gift and was a rite of passage in an Italian family. Homemade raviolis are my all-time favorite dish, without a doubt. These are part of our Italian Christmas dinner, as well as when we get together with cousins and other relatives that we haven't seen in a while. We make the marinara, the pasta, and the filling all from scratch. It's the best thing you have ever eaten!

Some of my greatest childhood memories were made in the kitchen alongside my grandmother, aunts, mom and cousins. The incredible aromas of fresh basil, garlic and tomatoes filled the air as generations gathered together to share Italian traditions and authentic family recipes. I have worked in finance all my life, and still do today at Transamerica, but sharing my love of Italian cooking with others has always been a passion of mine.

Gia's Italian Kitchen brings friends & family together through online and in-person Italian cooking. In decades past, families and friends lived in the same communities and same cities. Families had dinner together on Sundays and maintained relationships & communities to support each other. Today, we are all over the country, and have lost touch with our loved ones, and those who support us. I am helping to rekindle and foster those relationships that were more valued in the past. I prepare my participants with grocery and gadget lists ahead of time, so we are all at the same starting point when it's showtime, and they are ready to catch up & laugh with friends & family.

The future of my business is to grow and scale my three creative services, keeping the interactive theme in the foreground:

1. **Private group classes** offer an online or in-person experience for friends and family to create a dinner party through Italian cooking, where I guide them, instruct them, and facilitate the connection.
2. **The employer culture program** can be a combination of online and in-person team building activities to enhance the employee experience and show them appreciation for their hard work. Come together in person (I can provide a venue) or create a progressive food event with multiple locations!
3. **Personalized coaching programs** are live cooking courses, either online or in-person, where we cook side-by-side and people ask questions in real time. These can be individual or in a group.

ADDITIONAL EDUCATION / CERTIFICATION

- Certified Public Accountant, Inactive
- Boise State University, Boise, ID – 1999, BBA in Accounting
- University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA – 1995, BBA in Finance & Spanish, minor in Accounting
- University of Seville, Spain – 1993, International Business and Spanish studies.
- Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI – 1990-1992 – Business, transferred to University of Iowa

ORGANIZATIONS / VOLUNTEER WORK

- Orchestra Iowa, Board and Finance Committee – 2021 to present
- Washington High School PTA, Treasurer – 2019 to 2025
- Cedar Valley Montessori School, Board President, Fundraising Chair – 2006 to 2013
- Oncology Associates, volunteer